

Assembly member Luis Alejo  
Chair, Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0030

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014

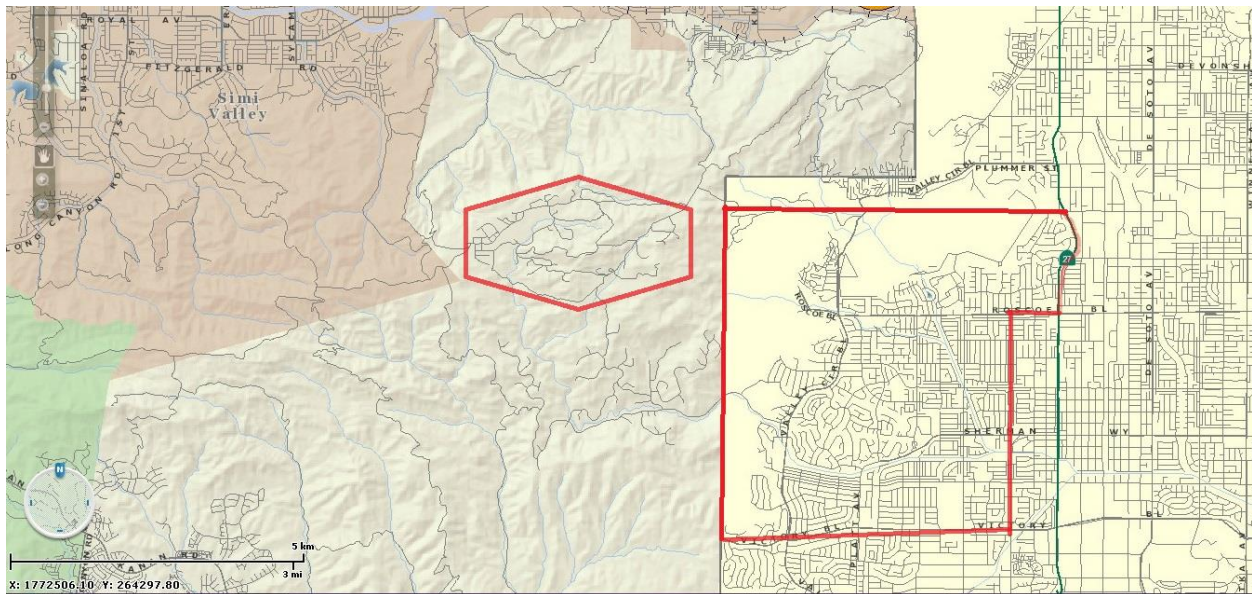
Dear Assembly member Alejo,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you by letter in regards to your hearing on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 regarding the DTSC Budget and other DTSC related issues.

I watched this hearing on my computer live. I have also watched parts of the hearing on my TV.

My comments will be related to the testimony of DTSC in relation to my knowledge of their department, my interactions with them over an eight year period, and my involvement specifically with DTSC related to the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site (SSFL) during that period. The SSFL site is on the eastern boundary of Ventura County where it borders Los Angeles County.

I have lived in the community of West Hills for 36 ½ years. I believe that all of West Hills, which is a community within the City of Los Angeles, is within five miles of the SSFL boundaries. Every large truck that goes to the SSFL site or leaves the SSFL site must go through parts of West Hills.



This map from the Ventura County website shows the SSFL site in the middle in the red hexagon, and West Hills in the area to the east outlined in red.

Public Health and Public Safety is my passion. I have a B.S. in Health Education, and I began the Masters in Public Health program at California State University Northridge (CSUN) around 1992. I had one upper

division course in Environmental Health, and then I had to take a personal leave because I was going to school while caring for my two children. My involvement in their lives had to come before the completion of my education. Two years later, my home, and the CSUN campus were hit by the Northridge earthquake. I had to leave my home for seven months. It took years to rebuild CSUN, and by that time, I had new responsibilities. I was not able to complete my MPH, but I have used my public health and public safety background as a community volunteer for more than 25 years.

Before I address the DTSC related issues, I want to thank you for listening to the testimony of the people who believe that they are victims of toxic sites. I am not familiar with the sites in this testimony other than the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site.

I would like you to know that I empathize with people with cancer and other diseases because my mother died of metastatic breast cancer, and I have had cancer myself. My mother had breast cancer, and she did not live in California.

I had an extremely rare cancer – a neuroendocrine tumor of the pancreas. I am one of the lucky ones because my cancer was caught early, and at this time, as a result of major surgery, I appear to be cancer free. But that does not mean that I am not subjected to numerous tests for tumor markers, and MRIs to determine if my cancer has returned. This cancer is the same cancer that Steve Jobs died of less than a month after my tumor, part of my pancreas, and my spleen were removed.

I also have numerous autoimmune diseases that cause chronic pain. I understood what one woman said when she said that her daughter (I believe) was in so much pain at times that you could not touch her skin. I feel the same way at times.

However, from my health background, and my in depth studies on cancer, autoimmune illnesses, and my symptoms, I know that I will never know the source of my illnesses. Some are from genetic causes, and some are from environmental exposures of an unknown origin. I do not attribute my illnesses to the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site or any other locally contaminated sites.

I am fortunate to have some of the best physicians in the world. I am fortunate to be able to afford this health care because of my husband's employer. I understand that I may not be so lucky if I did not have health insurance. So I empathize with some of these victims and my mother who was forced to go on Disability Insurance after her breast cancer diagnosis.

### **Santa Susana Field Laboratory**

I became involved with the Santa Susana Field Laboratory issue about eight years ago because my son was camping at the adjacent Sage Ranch. I had read stories in the newspaper about the belief that chemicals were migrating to Simi Valley from Santa Susana. So I was concerned for the many youth groups – Boy Scouts in particular – that camped and do Eagle projects at Sage Ranch.

When I first became involved, I attended a West Hills Neighborhood Council Board meeting where the Santa Susana Field Laboratory issues were addressed. I then went on to attend the SSFL Workgroup meetings, DOE meetings, and eventually Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board meetings (LARWQCB), DTSC Technical meetings, Boeing Storm Water Panel meetings, SSFL Groundwater University meetings, DOE SSFL Soil Treatability Investigation Group meetings, NASA Technical meetings, NASA Section 106 Consulting Party meetings, and technical meetings with the Federal EPA on AREA IV and the Northern Buffer Zone of the SSFL site.

## **DTSC**

Due to a time deadline that I have – you have requested this testimony by October 10, 2014, I can only make a few statements. I have submitted numerous SSFL related documents to your assistants to follow this letter. I do hope that your aides will take the time to read the records that I have submitted.

The most important issues that I feel that I should address are the following:

- 1) DTSC does need to have time to collect what they can on their debts, and to implement the FISCAL program.
- 2) DTSC needs funding for additional staff – scientists, accountants, computer programmers, outreach specialists, and more legal experts.

I do not believe that our elected officials understand the delays and the costs to the DTSC employees when there is litigation related to the SSFL site. Some of the parties that spoke to you at your hearing are a part of Committee to Bridge the Gap which is one of the parties that is currently suing DTSC, CDPH, and the Boeing Company as the real party of interest. This litigation is related to the removal of Boeing structures in AREA IV of the SSFL site, and where some of the materials were sent to be disposed. This current litigation is delaying the SSFL cleanup by more than a year in my opinion.

The Boeing Company has volunteered not to remove the remainder of their structures in AREA IV of the SSFL site until after the hearing by Judge Sumner in the Sacramento Superior Court.

In the meantime, groups such as Consumer Watchdog, PSR – LA, the Southern California Federation of Scientists, and other groups, in my opinion, mislead local residents related to the current risks from the SSFL site. These groups misuse the term “Meltdown” and “Partial Meltdown” in my opinion, to create fear in my community. These terms are neither technical nor accurate related to the SSFL site.

In their testimony to Judge Sumner, CDPH has stated that there was no meltdown at the SSFL site, and no partial meltdown at the Sodium Reactor Experiment.

Finally, I have submitted the power points by Dr. Thomas Mack of USC and the California Cancer Registry to the record. Based on Dr. Mack’s presentations, and his other materials that I have read, I do understand that we can never prove or disprove that someone’s illnesses are from the SSFL site. But I

can also state from his presentations that he does not see increased incidence, cancer clusters, or any statistical correlation between the cancers surrounding the SSFL site and the Santa Susana lab itself.

I would enjoy the opportunity to discuss this issue and to provide further testimony in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christine L. Rowe*

West Hills, California